

Neglect and Exploitation

Title	Additional Information
<p>Global Perspective on Elder Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation</p>	<p>United Nations: growing concern with abuse, neglect and exploitation of seniors as global population ages. Global population of 60+ estimated to grow to 1.2 Billion plus - more than double from 1992 - 2025 Declares June 15th each year World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Admits world slow to recognize problem.</p>
	<p>UN Open Ended Working Group on Aging: Most elder abuse goes unreported. No legal definition of elder abuse currently accepted. Under reporting due to lack of confidence, reluctance to report as usually bound to live with perpetrators. having money does not guarantee abuse free. No international law or national laws across the board deal with abuse against elders. Most national laws on abuse focus on spousal abuse which are too narrow to capture much of the abuse older people encounter. Need for clearer global & national standards. Major gaps in access to justice. Elder Law should be based on 3 goals - Autonomy, Dignity, Quality of Life.</p>
	<p>Governments have ad hoc policies in response to dramatic increase in the # of older people. Failure to establish acceptable standard of action and social support. Discrimination and neglect exist in every country. Income falls short of needs. Basic Health Care often goes unmet. Housing in short supply & expensive. Older people socially marginalized. Face frailty, neglect and harassment.</p>
<p>Global Perspective on Elder Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation</p>	<p>South Africa. Elder Rights Activists reveal startling abuses. Police not doing enough to protect elderly. Officers not familiar with stipulations of Older Persons Act of 2006. Money lenders charge exorbitant & illegal interest rates to seniors - 30 -50%. Those suffering dementia or Alzheimer's' tormented, abused because seen as witches who exhibit strange behaviour. India: Poverty, Illiteracy & rural feminization exacerbate elder abuse. Latin America: Charter of San Jose on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and Caribbean (2012) to "Stop the Abuse & Maltreatment of Older Persons so that they can claim full recognition as persons with rights and not as clients and Patients. Implementation and Action are facing systemic and structural barriers. There is frustration about lack of progress however commitment to continue working to improve the situation.</p>

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Canadian Perspective	Federal Elder Abuse Initiative launched June 2008. Environics commissioned report found: Abuse Affects 4 - 10% of older adults - 65+. only 1 in 5 incidents come to attention of those that can help. Tip of the iceberg in a rapidly growing seniors population.
	96% of Canadians think most abuse hidden or undetected. 22% of Canadians think a senior they know personally might be experiencing abuse; 90% feel the abuse gets worse over time; 91% feel raising awareness among seniors about their right to live safely & securely is the most important issue for gov'ts to address. 12% of Canadians have sought out information about a situation or suspected situation of elder abuse or elder abuse in general. (Environics)
	Economic Action Plan 2013 (June) gov't proposes to better safeguard well being of seniors. Older people with disabilities & people who are deaf will benefit from increased access to support & services aimed at preventing elder abuse through the New Horizons for Seniors Programs (NHSP). \$14millions dollars in NHSP funding supports 33 Pan Canadian Initiatives.
What is it?	Update: Federal Ministry of State for Seniors: "Any Action by Someone in a Relationship of Trust that Results in Harm or Distress to an Older Person. RCMP Definition "Violence, mistreatment, neglect that older adults living in either private residences or institutions may experience at the hands of their spouses, children, other family members, caregivers, service providers or other individuals in situations of power or trust. Invisibility of Abuse as Often remains unreported due to embarrassment, fear of retaliation or loss of services, don't want to get caregiver in trouble. Some elders don't realize they are being abused, neglected or exploited. Stats hard to come by.
Who is It?	Who is the Abuser? Abuse can be committed by virtually anyone - family member; friend; formal & informal caregivers ; strangers. Abuse is typically intentional while exploitation and neglect can be either intentional or unintentional. Family & Friends provide 80 -90% of care to ill or disabled persons, including the elderly.

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Caregiver Abuse	Rename Caregiver Abuse - Informal Caregiver - Family or Friend. 75% of abuse is committed by someone close to the abused elder. Caregiving can be rewarding but long term or intensive caregiving can negatively impact a person's health & well being. - loss of sleep; lack of physical exercise, neglect of their own preventive health care, & social isolation. Can lead to back injuries, headaches, hypertension, stress, burnout and clinical depression. Higher risk among caregivers who are older, lower income, have health issues of their own. The number of seniors caring for older seniors will only increase as population ages. Public Health Agency of Canada working to identify best practice interventions to promote caregivers health.
Negative Ageism	Growing tendency to blame elderly for escalating health care costs and difficulties in accessing services
Signs of Neglect	Can be self neglect or neglect by others. unkempt appearance, broken eye glasses, lack of appropriate clothing, lack of eyewear, hearing aid, dentures & other necessities; malnutrition,dehydration, poor personal hygiene, untreated sores, hazardous or unsafe living conditions or arrangements (dirt, fleas, lice, soiled bedding, smell of urine or feces.)
Signs of Sexual Abuse	Venereal disease, genital infections, torn, stained or bloody underwear, vaginal or anal bleeding, bruising around breasts or genital area.
Signs of Psychological Abuse	Changes in behaviour, emotional upset or agitation resulting in sucking, biting, rocking, withdrawn, non-responsive, usually attributed to dementia (i.e. rocking, sucking, biting)
Financial Abuse	Change title to Economic & Financial Abuse - believed to be the most common form of elder abuse

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Signs of Financial/Economic Abuse	Sudden changes in banking account or banking practices, unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money by the person or a person accompanying the elderly person. coercing an elderly person into signing a document (wills, contracts), negotiating an elderly persons' cheques without authorization, stealing or misusing an elderly persons money or possessions, forging their signature or misuse of power of attorney. Although easy to create, EPOA's are very powerful documents and have been called a licence to steal. (Scrivener, Vol 22, #1, Spring 2013)
Signs of Institutional Abuse	Overcrowded, substandard and/or unsanitary living conditions, inadequate care & nutrition, aggressive/inappropriate staff-client relations, use of chemical and physical restraints to exert control
Spiritual Abuse	Restricted or loss of spiritual practices, customs, traditions
Statistics & Research	Change to 4 - 10% of 65+ population abused in some fashion. most unreported. Financial Abuse still the most prevalent form. In 2009 Police reported over 2,400 seniors were victims of violent crime by a family member - 1/3 of all violent incidents committed against older adults (65+). Overall rate of violent victimization higher for senior men than senior women, however family related violent victimization was higher among women. Senior men more likely to be victimized by an acquaintance or a stranger. Spouses and grown children are the most common perpetrators of family violence against women, while grown children are the most common perpetrators against senior men. 53% of police reported cases involved common assault, the least serious form of assault. (Stats Canada Report on Family Violence - 2009)
It Starts With Prevention	It takes more than a legislative approach. Prevention is a social responsibility that requires networking and collaboration as noted earlier in the presentation.

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Contributing Factors	Information from 2010 Govt report and listed on RCMP website - Factors that play a role in Elder Abuse - Gender, Age, level of frustration, anger or despair, past history, living arrangements, level of financial or emotional dependence on others, psychological & mental factors, environmental factors, systemic factors.
Effects of Abuse/Neglect	The stress associated with abuse & neglect can lead to long term physical and psychological problems. Impact of Elder Abuse can be heart attack, stroke, anxiety, depression, angina, high blood pressure, panic attacks, poverty, isolation, over or under medicating and, in some cases, death.